FROM HEAVY ROCK TO THE BIRDS AND THE BEES...

THAT'S ROGER GLOVER'S BUTTERFLY BALL

Wendy Hodgson talks to Roger Glover

ON REFLECTION, warbler Burl Ives could have headed towards what might have been an intricate project when he issued the single The Ugly Bug Ball.

It may have conjured up endless possibilities of furthering the tale in various directions had the imagination been stimulated a little more. But it wasn't.

Then, over a year ago, illustrator Alan Aldridge created a selection of animated drawings which was later set to verse by poet William Plomer, and it told the tale of The Butterfly Ball and the Grass Hopper's Feast and in particular the magic day where animals that normally eat each other can be found eating together.

Book, record and film

Suddenly what began as an enchanting book expanded . . . the Butterfly Ball is now an album, a single and a three minute long animated film sequence, as well.

It started when ex-Deep Purple bassist, Roger Glover, was approached by John Craig, head of British Lion Music to write an album to fit the moods of Aldridge's illustrations, "I knew I could do it" says Roger, "but I was worried in case my inspiration ran dry and I couldn't come up with the goods."

Me and my piano . . .

So for months, Roger sat around planning what he was going to do, bearing in mind that his first task would be to write a single which summed up the whole of the book, so that by listening to this single you would get a feeling of what the Butterfly Ball was all about.

"I had just bought a house when I began working on the album" he begins "and a grand piano was all the furniture I had. So betweeen Eddie Hardin, piano player and song writer, and myself we produced the single, Love Is All and later Homeward — another album track."

Assistance also came from Ronnie Deo a member of Elf whom Roger produces, and Micky Lee who pounded out two more tracks and started the ball rolling.

In all it took three months in which to complete the album and to find complementary vocalists for each track. If they didn't work out then other musicians were found. The final product is a clever insight on Roger's behalf to portray music suitable for the Butterfly Ball book.

"I only hope the album will be judged on its own merit" said Roger. "But there are several things which could go against it such as my name with Deep Purple. In actual fact this album is more me. The LP cannot be slotted into any set category because it will only work if it's taken in the context of the Butterfly Ball."

Aside from writing the material, Roger was featured on guitar, piano, bass and synthesiser.

Lee Mishkin and Alan Aldridge are the men behind the forthcoming cartoon series to be shown, hopefully, next year.

"The Butterfly Ball was a challenge. I found it very stimulating and besides, I work much better under pressure. I had strict lines within which to work; it had to fit the illustrations of the book; and it will be featured throughout a cartoon series."

Roger openly admits that he's always been a writer, probably more of a writer than a musician. That's why he left Deep Purple; he was beginning to feel stifled because the music that should have been coming from him was not allowed to come out.

"It took me six months to recover from being a part of Deep Purple" Roger laughs. "Since that time I did very little because I was mentally and physically on my back. I produced Nazareth for a while, and then began writing my own album to release all the music I still had left inside of me. However it didn't work out because I got very cynical about the business. I abandoned the idea, sat around for a while and then the Butterfly Ball came along."

Perhaps the greatest question to follow is . . . what will be happening next? Will Roger continue producing bands, or will he join up with another group? "If I do end up in a band again it won't be someone else's. It will be my own. I'm offered production work all the time. I enjoy it but too much can be quite frustrating. Really I don't know what will happen after this!"